

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

HA-05 /069 W

-----108050 180134Z /13

R 161500Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2180

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PROP, MI

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BANDA AGAIN BANS FOREIGN JOURNALISTS

REF: LILONGWE 1289

1. PRESIDENT BANDA'S FORECEFUL CONDEMNATION (MADE AT CLOSING OF PARLIAMENT AUGUST 14) OF ALL FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AS A GROUP CAME AS A SURPRISE TO MOST IF NOT ALL SENIOR MALAWIAN OFFICIALS. THESE INCLUDE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY, NGWIRI, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION, TATTERSAL, DIRECTOR OF MALAWI BROADCASTING, CHIKUNI, SENIOR MAYOR DOMO AT THE PALACE, TOM BARBOUR, AND MANY MINISTRY PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES. LATE AUGUST 16 NGWIRI TOLD ME THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHICH ARTICLE INFURIATED BANDA WITH STATEMENT THAT RECENT MALAWIAN ELECTIONS WERE NOT FREE. ALL ARTICLES WE AND AFOREMENTIONED OFFICIALS HAVE SEEN WERE EITHER marginally OR SIGNIFICANTLY FAVORABLE TO MALAWI AND NONE OF THEM DESCRIBED ELECTIONS AS BEING "NOT FREE".

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2. COINCIDENTALLY, ONE FOREIGN JOURNALIST (A BRITISHER WHO REPRESENTS "MODERN AFRICA") ARRIVED LATE AUGUST 14, HAVING PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED PERMISSION OF DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND PRESUMABLY THE PRESIDENT (WHO CLEARS ALL SUCH VISITS). HIS APPOINTMENTS WERE CANCELLED WITH HIS CONCURRENCE AND HE IS TAKING WEEK-LONG RESPITE ON LAKE MALAWI WHILE NGWIRI AND TATTERSAL ATTEMPT TO

SORT THIS OUT WITH PRESIDENT BANDA.

3. COMMENT: IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT, WITH AN INCREASING OPENNESS APPARENT ON BANDA'S PART IN RECENT MONTHS, HE FOUND AN EXCUSE TO CHOKE OFF ACCESS BY FOREIGN NEWSMEN WHO APPEARED TO HAVE DONE HIM MUCH MORE GOOD THAN HARM OVER PAST YEAR. THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO OF THE GROUP THAT WAS HERE IN LATE JUNE AND EARLY JULY FOR THE FIRST NATIONAL ELECTIONS AND NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS. AS WILL BE DESCRIBED BY SEPTTEL, BANDA APPEARS TO DESIRE GREATER EXPRESSION OF MALAWI'S VIEWS. THIS OF COURSE CANNOT COME ABOUT IF FOREIGN NEWSMEN ARE PROHIBITED. SHEINBAUM

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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